

## How to Do Business with the Forest Service - Pacific Southwest - Region 5/CA

Doing business with the Federal government, including the Forest Service, can be complicated. The following information is intended to provide a brief overview of the steps necessary to position a business concern to do business with the Forest Service and the Federal government. Also contacts are provided regarding additional resources that will assist a business concern in understanding the processes of doing business with the Forest Service and other Federal government agencies.

### Step one-Be formed in a business like way -

To successfully bid and perform Federal government and Forest Service contracts businesses are expected to follow applicable Federal, state and local laws. From a business perspective this includes being appropriately registered as a business under state and local rules, carrying adequate insurance including workers compensation if an employer, and in the case of construction contracts having the ability to adequately bond projects under the Federal government's surety bonding requirements which are different than the state license bonding requirements required of some businesses. A computer, or computer access, is also needed and a valid email address as contracting in the Federal government is dependent in many cases on computer processes through "on-line" databases. When formed in a business like way a business is then ready to learn more about winning contracts with the Federal government.

### Step Two-Register in the System for Award Management (SAM) -

Any business that wants to bid or provide proposals on Federal government projects must be registered in SAM. Register on-line at: <https://www.sam.gov/index.html> Registration will go much more smoothly if certain information is at hand prior to beginning the registration process. If a person registering does not have the information available the SAM site will guide a person through obtaining the information which will slow the registration process. Basic information needed is -

- **DUNS Number** - As a portion of SAM registration there is an area to click for the "D&B Web Form for DUNS Number Request". <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
- **Company Name** - As noted in Step One following State and local requirements for registering a business is important to doing business with the Federal government.
- **Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN)** - In cases of a sole proprietorship this may be a Social Security Number, for corporations and other business formations a TIN is needed and obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Go to: [http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=96696\\_00.html](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=96696_00.html)
- **Financial Institution Information** - Business bank information will be required including the American Business Association (ABA) routing number for the account, account number and other information that will be used by Federal agencies to make payment when the business has won a contract.
- **Other Information** - Also needed is information about the business such as address, number of employees, annual receipts, etc. Additionally information about the goods/services provided identified by NAICS number, Product Service Code (PSC), Federal Supply Classification (FSC) and other needs will be requested and SAM will help guide a business registering on how to obtain this information.
- **On-Line Representations and Certification Application (ORCA)** - As a portion of SAM Registration, the business will be instructed to complete an annual online representation/certification. This must be accomplished before SAM registration can be completed.
- **SAM "Look Alike" Websites:** The Forest Service has become aware of several organizations that appear to serve the same function as SAM. In these cases, you will notice that the website ends in

.com, rather than .gov. It is recommended that contractors go directly to the SAM website at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) to complete their registration (**THIS SITE IS FREE!**).

- If using a link or searching for the site, ensure the web address is a .gov site and not .com, .org or other.
- The Forest Service is also aware of private corporations that provide SAM registration support for a fee. The Forest Service does not endorse these organizations, but cannot dictate how a contractor completes registration. If utilizing one of these organizations, it is your responsibility to ensure any information provided in your SAM registration is complete and accurate.
- In lieu of paying a fee for assistance, vendors can receive assistance, free of charge, from the Small Business Administration; Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs); State economic development agencies; and local chambers of commerce (Links provided in Step Four below).

### **Step Three - Learn about available Federal projects to submit a bid or proposal on -**

Almost all Federal project solicitations for bids or proposals over \$25,000 are advertised on Federal Business Opportunities, also known as FedBizOpps.gov and found at <https://www.fbo.gov> a user guide is available for a "Vendor" on the website to assist in using the site.

### **Step Four- Learn about doing business with the Federal government and Forest Service -**

There are many websites and resources to assist businesses in understanding doing business with the Federal government. There are many unique aspects such as the Federal Acquisition Regulations that govern how the Federal government issues solicitations for work and writes the contracts that result from the solicitations. The resources that can help in understanding doing business with the Federal government include -

- Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) - Located in every state PTAC's assist businesses in understanding how to prepare bids and proposals on Federal government contracts. To locate the appropriate **CA PTAC** go to: <http://www.sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/CA/local-resources/2> or link to "Find a PTAC" at- <http://www.ptac-us.org/find-a-ptac/?state=CA> .
  - Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) - Organized in association with the Small Business Administration, the SBDC's provide general assistance on business structure, and how to obtain business loans and surety bonding. Some assistance is provided regarding Federal government contracting too. Find the nearest **SBDC in CA** by visiting <http://www.sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/CA/local-resources/128>.
  - Small Business Administration (SBA) - The SBA is the Federal Agency tasked with assisting small businesses to be successful. SBA's general website is available as <http://www.sba.gov> There is also an SBA website that deals specifically with Doing Business With the Federal Government found at <http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/index.html>
  - Small Disadvantaged Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) - Veteran Business Outreach Center (VBOC), Sacramento, CA email to: [admin@vbocix.org](mailto:admin@vbocix.org) 916-527-8400.
  - The Pacific Southwest Region Acquisition for Region 5 of the Forest Service maintains an informational website for prospective contractors. This website is available for public viewing on the internet at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/workingtogether/contracting> and provides -
    - Contact information for Contracting Officers across Region 5 AQM
    - Link to Grants and Agreements website
    - Links to other important websites/programs for conducting business with the Forest Service
- WO AQM: <http://www.fs.fed.us/working-with-us/contracts-commercial-permits/how-to-contract-with-forest-service>.
- Find other regional Acquisition websites at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/contactus/regions.shtml>, look for links to contracting.
- If interested in contracting with the Forest Service with regard to Incidents (wild land fire and other all-hazard incidents) please visit the following website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/>